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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5567  
INFO RUCNCOM/EC CARICOM COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1059  
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0535  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0205  
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 2229

UNCLAS GEORGETOWN 000713

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [GY](#)  
SUBJECT: PNCR'S RETURN TO POLITICS AS USUAL

REF: GEORGETOWN 690

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Robert Corbin was returned unopposed as Leader of the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) after Vincent Alexander and his team of supporters formally withdrew from the elections for party leader and members of the Central Executive Committee (CEC). Alexander's withdrawal, after the party's refusal to verify its suddenly increased member list, has led many PNCR supporters to question whether this signifies a return to the old days of dirty politics by the PNCR. Newspaper editorials and man on the street surveys were decidedly critical of the party's handling of the situation. ENDSUMMARY.

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NO VERIFICATION, NO OPPOSITION  
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¶2. (SBU) Robert Corbin was returned unopposed as Leader of the PNCR after his sole opponent, Vincent Alexander, formally withdrew from the elections for party leader. As reported in refetl, the PNCR entered this weekend's Biennial Congress with many controversial issues, foremost of which was the question of whether to proceed without verifying the significantly swelled party member list. In what could best be described as a tension-filled meeting Saturday morning, which saw heckling inside the hall and a physical fight between two supporters of Corbin and Alexander outside in the courtyard, the PNCR 15th Biennial Congress voted against the postponement of the elections for the leader of the party following which Alexander and his followers withdrew from the elections. Afterward, Alexander told local newspapers that he was not leaving the party, but was still considering whether to seek a legal opinion to determine the credibility of the elections.

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CHEATER, CHEATER, PUMPKIN EATER  
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¶3. (SBU) Numerous editorials, like "Cheater, Cheater, Pumpkin Eater" and "The PNC Implodes Today", maligned the PNCR's decision to proceed with the leadership elections without verification. Calling the sudden increase in membership of the PNCR in the last two weeks "a real cock and bull story", one of Guyana's most prominent columnists suggested that democratic members of the PNCR should picket the remainder of the congress and "chase those crazy (manipulators) out of town". Many other editorials questioned whether the PNCR had returned to the bad old days when the party was known for rigging elections. In a local newspaper's "man on the street" survey, the respondents unanimously agreed that the PNCR's internal elections should have been held to the same standard (verification) as that

which they had called for in the national elections.

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COMMENT  
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[¶4.](#) (SBU) To no one's surprise, the PNCR decided to hold their leadership elections despite the serious questions about the veracity of their membership list. This raises troubling questions. First, it is a sign that the PNCR may be heading back to its "bad old days" of dirty politics and rigged elections. Second, and more troubling, is that their recent congress shows a party that is clearly fractured and in a steady state of decline. For the moment, it appears Guyana only has one viable party, the ruling PPP.  
Robinson